

# THE TRANSPORTATION LINK



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Disadvantaged  
Business Utilization

**T**his month's *Transportation Link* focuses on Secretary Slater's top transportation priority, **SAFETY!**

I ask each of you to become better informed of traffic safety issues both individually and at your small business. If we all make an effort to focus sharply on practicing heightened safety awareness, we can make a difference by saving lives and preventing injuries.

For small businesses, it is especially important to take the time and talk with your staff and family about traffic safety and what they can do to improve it. Emphasize that traffic safety factors are issues that your company cares about.

As we celebrate May as Asian American Awareness month, let us all recognize and honor the contributions Asian Americans and business owners have made to American History and the economic development of our great Nation.

I would also like to extend a *Special Thank You* to the team at Base Technologies, Inc. (BTI) for the outstanding support they have provided OSDBU and our small business customers during the past year.

BTI was founded in 1987 by President and CEO, Robert Nakamoto and provides technology-based information services and customer service support to the Office through a contractual partnership under the SBA's 8(a) Program.

## Traffic Safety Is Good Business

*Effective Strategies That Promote Traffic Safety Can Save a Life ... and Your Company*

**D**oes your business have an employee traffic safety plan? Given that on- and off-job traffic crashes cost U.S. businesses billions of dollars each year, small businesses need to be aware of the impact an automobile crash could have on their company's continued productivity and profitability, not to mention the staff's health and welfare.

The U.S. Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) reports that someone is injured in a traffic crash every 14 seconds on the nation's roads and highways and an automobile fatality occurs every 12 minutes. Over forty-four thousand (44,000) Americans lose their lives in transportation-related incidents and another 3.4 million are injured.

The resulting insurance, lost wages, health care and other costs exceed \$150 billion annually, and losses in terms of human suffering are incalculable. The good news is that using safety belts reduces automobile fatalities by 45 percent — and according to recent studies — saves 10,000 American lives each year. Despite these encouraging numbers, only 70 percent of U.S. drivers buckle up.

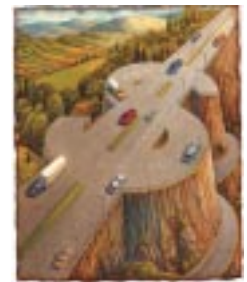
The U.S. Department of Transportation cares very much about safety. In the Department's Strategic Plan, safety is highlighted as DOT's highest priority. In the spirit of ONE DOT, safety issues are emphasized throughout all of DOT's operating administrations.

In support of these efforts, U.S. Transportation Secretary Rodney E. Slater recently held a two-day national safety conference to develop a Transportation Safety Action Plan for the nation that identifies specific strategies to save lives and reduce injuries.

Secretary Slater opened the conference by initiating a national pledge to "Sign on for Safety" by promising to always:

- Be alert and stay sober;
- Buckle up and use child safety seats;
- Stay in control and respect speed limits;
- Obey all signs, signals, instructions and safety rules; and
- Avoid all safety and security risks.

The conference highlighted the safety efforts of citizens, corporations, advocacy groups and public employees to strengthen and reinforce the existing efforts of current initiatives and achieve a common vision for a 21<sup>st</sup> century transportation agenda.



*Continued on next page*

**OSDBU**

Office of Small  
and Disadvantaged  
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wants to hear from you!! Call us toll-free at 1 800 532-1169 with questions or comments about this newsletter or our web site. The *Transportation Link's* content may be reprinted without permission.



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It is very important for you to commit your small businesses to these safety efforts – for the sake of your employees and for the sake of your business.

For example, the loss or incapacitation of one manager or employee can have significant impact on the performance of a small business. Percentage-wise – in a small business – the loss of an employee to injury or death from an automobile crash significantly reduces the workforce and the business's ability to maintain peak performance. The same is true if they have a family member injured.

DOT has many specific safety initiatives that can be tailored to meet your company's needs. We encourage you to familiarize yourselves with all of them. Prominent among these safety initiatives are seat belt usage, impaired driving and aggressive driving.

#### Seat Belts

Seat belts save lives. They are the single most effective means of reducing fatalities and serious injuries when traffic crashes occur and are estimated to save 9,500 lives in America each year. Research has found that lap/shoulder belts, when used properly, reduce the

risk of fatal injury to front seat passenger car occupants by 45 percent and the risk of moderate-to-critical injury by 50 percent.

For light truck occupants, seat belts reduce the risk of fatal injury by 60 percent and moderate-to-critical injury by 65 percent. The preventative and proactive safety measure of properly securing your child in a correctly fastened safety seat improves his or her survival chances by 75 percent!

#### Impaired Driving

Impaired driving is a problem that inflicts devastating costs on our society ... both emotional and economic. In a report issued two years ago, almost 40 percent of all traffic fatalities were alcohol-related.

If current statistics hold, about 3 in every 10 Americans will be involved in an alcohol-related crash at some time in their lives. The rate of alcohol involvement in fatal crashes is nearly three and one-half times as high at night as during the day and for all crashes, the alcohol involvement rate is nearly five times as high at night.

Grass roots education efforts by local employers can reduce automobile injuries and fatalities from these types of problems even further.

#### Aggressive Driving

Unfortunately, as transportation safety professionals work to reduce automobile traffic crashes, new road haz-

ard phenomenon caused by the pressure on individuals coping with a rapidly changing society is raising new concerns. The most publicized of new high risk behaviors is *aggressive driving*.

Some of the symptoms of *aggressive driving* include:

- Tailgating, or driving faster than the surrounding traffic;
- Improper passing;
- Cutting off other drivers;
- Speeding or disregarding traffic signals; and
- Weaving through traffic or making obscene hand gestures and honking horns.

*Aggressive Driving* often results when drivers use the anonymity of their automobiles to take out their frustrations on anybody they feel has offended them or is not driving in a manner they find suitable.

By implementing a workable traffic safety program in your workplace, you can greatly reduce the risks faced by your employees and their families, while protecting your business.

For more information on DOT's safety initiatives, visit the NHTSA web site at <http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov> or call the NHTSA hotline at 888-DASH-2-DOT (888-327-4236.)

For information on new safety initiative promotions, e-mail NHTSA's Richard Dixon at [rdixon@nhtsa.dot.gov](mailto:rdixon@nhtsa.dot.gov)



## Follow the Money

**S**t. Louis, Missouri, often referred to as the "Gateway to the West", is today involved with a movement to make St. Louis a nationwide leading region in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, using the year 2004 as a symbolic goal. The mission of the task force, named *St. Louis 2004*, is to make the St. Louis region a greater place, a place in which people want to live and a place to which people want to move to.

The St. Louis Action Plan includes 11 initiatives to revitalize the St. Louis region. As a result of these initiatives, look for contracting opportunities in abundance over the next few years.

Contracting opportunities will include the procurement of products and services and span the spectrum of everything from construction to information technology.

The following highlights a few of the opportunities that are forthcoming:

- \$4M in downtown St. Louis "streetscape" improvements;
- \$.8M for each of fiscal years 1999 through 2003 to the Corps of Engineers for resurfacing and maintenance of city and county roads that provide

See 'Follow the Money' on next page





## For Abratique & Associates Persistence Pays Off

**L**os Angeles resident, Efren Abratique started *Abratique & Associates* in 1988 to capitalize on his engineering expertise in traffic signal system design. After resisting a job offer from



***Abratique & Associates  
President & Founder  
Efren Abratique***

a large California engineering firm with transportation ties, it was suggested that Abratique start up a business to then be hired as a subconsultant.

*Abratique & Associates* was born with a \$45 thousand civil engineering subcontract to troubleshoot the Metro Blue LRT Project (Long Beach-Los Angeles Light Rail) in Los Angeles County.

*Abratique & Associates* is a Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) full service engineering firm specializing in Traffic System Design and Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) and is currently filing an application for 8(a) designation through the SBA.

They have grossed over \$1 million in total annual revenue several times

during the last 11 years and now employ anywhere from 15 to 24 people depending on current staffing requirements.

The majority of *Abratique & Associates'* ITS work centers on the preparation of Plans, Specification and Estimates (PS&E) for ITS Traffic Operation System (TOS) elements and traffic signal system as well as system engineering and software development support for large ITS projects in Southern California. They are a part of a National Engineering Technology's (NET) ITS team working for California Dept. of Transportation (CALTRANS) major ITS projects.

For getting started, Abratique credits DOT's Short Term Lending Program (STLP) as being a major help.

"For a small business like ours, the STLP was instrumental in getting us off the ground," says Abratique who learned about the program from an engineering magazine article. "I was probably one of the first STLP clients in California."

The STLP is currently being administered by OSDBU's STLP manager Nancy Strine, to offer certified DBEs the opportunity to obtain short-term working capital at prime interest rates for transportation related projects. Cathay Bank of Los Angeles, CA and Hamilton Bank of Miami, FL are the two partici-

pating partners in this program.

Cathay Bank's Business Banking Officer Wayne Chow, credits Abratique's persistence as the key reason for the companies' longevity. "Business cycles fluctuate," says Chow. "You want someone who doesn't throw in the towel when there is a downturn."

"I never quit," adds Abratique who describes success as motivating. "When you're doing well, it motivates you to work harder marketing and meeting potential clients."

For the future, Abratique intends to utilize the 8(a) program to expand federal contracting opportunities and his businesses' economic fortunes.



***Cathay Bank's  
Wayne Chow***

*For more information about Abratique & Associates, call (213) 251-5960, or soon visit their web site at: [www.abratique.com](http://www.abratique.com). Cathay Bank may be reached at (213) 625-4709. Hamilton Bank may be reached at (305) 717-5536. To contact Nancy Strine, call (800) 532-1169 ext. 65343 or visit <http://osdbuweb.dot.gov/MP/mktpkg10.htm>*

### ***From 'Follow the Money' on last page***

access to Corps of Engineers reservoirs;

- \$8.25M to construct Jefferson Avenue viaduct over Mill Creek Valley in St. Louis;

- \$1.65M to construct Grand Avenue viaduct over Mill Creek Valley in St. Louis;

- \$10M to upgrade I-70 in Missouri; and

- \$10M to other high priority highway and bridge projects.

These are just a few of the contracting opportunities in the St. Louis re-

gion that have been created as a result of recent TEA-21 legislation. Refer to the following web site for additional information on TEA-21, <http://osdbuweb.dot.gov/istea.htm>.

In summary, St. Louis 2004 is seeking small businesses from all over the United States to participate in this revitalization effort. As the Gateway to the West, the entire country is asked to take notice of this initiative.

Small, disadvantaged, 8(a) and women-owned businesses are especially encouraged to seek contracting opportunities in the area.

St. Louis 2004 has established a 25 percent goal to encourage their participation. It is important to bookmark the St. Louis 2004 web site at: <http://www.stlouis2004.org>, as many contracting opportunities will be referenced in the near term.

*For more information on the St. Louis 2004 initiative, please contact Sandra Moore, Vice President, St. Louis 2004 at (314) 436-2004 or visit their web site <http://www.stlouis2004.org>.*



## DBE Update

**T**he General Counsel of the Department of Transportation has issued a second set of questions and answers on the new Disadvantaged Business Enterprise program regulations, to help further clarify this critical ruling.

Examples of these new questions are as follows:

■ What types of contracts can be counted toward DBE goals?

■ In implementing the required prompt payment clause, may recipients require prime contractors to provide evidence of payment of retainage to subcontractors?

■ When should recipients require owners of a DBE firm certified under part 23 to submit a statement of disadvantage?

You can learn the answers to these, and 25 other new questions, in the DBE section of the OSDBU web site at <http://osdbuweb.dot.gov/programs/dbe/dbe.htm>

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS FOR May / June 1999

| Date       | Place  | Contact   |
|------------|--|---|
| May 18     | 9th Annual Procurement Opportunities Conf/Expo<br>Upper Marlboro, MD                                     | Nomiki Handakaros<br>(301) 206-2940<br>ext. 238   |
| May 19     | Women Business Enterprise Day<br>FHWA/FRA/NHTSA<br>DOT Nassif Building,<br>Washington, DC                | To register visit:<br><a href="http://fhinter.fhwa.dot.gov/maymarketplace/">http://fhinter.fhwa.dot.gov/maymarketplace/</a><br>(800) 532-1169 |
| May 17-21  | Canada / U.S.A. Businesswomen's Trade Summit '99<br>Royal York Hotel in Toronto, Ontario                 | Andrina Lever<br>(416) 920-5114<br><a href="mailto:andrina@ibm.net">andrina@ibm.net</a>   |
| May 27     | NASA Goddard Space Flight Center's SDB Conference & Science Forum<br>Greenbelt, MD                       | Gil Del Valle<br>(301) 286-8136   |
| May 27-28  | SDB (Small Disadvantaged Business) Conference on New SDB Regulations<br>Sponsored by SBA<br>Seattle, WA. | Diana Drake, SBA<br>(206) 553-7341<br><a href="mailto:diana.drake@sba.gov">diana.drake@sba.gov</a>  |
| June 4-9   | FAA/AMAC Conference<br>Houston, TX   | Cheryl Thomas<br>(817) 222-4355   |
| June 8-11  | 32nd Annual Joint Industry SBA Procurement Conference Awards/Trade Fair<br>Washington, DC                | Register at: <a href="http://www.sba.gov/gc/expo.htm">www.sba.gov/gc/expo.htm</a><br>or call: (877) 722-3263                                  |
| June 15    | 3rd Annual Native American Lifesavers Conference<br>Bismark, ND  | Dennis Renville<br>(701) 255-3285   |
| June 17-20 | National Black Chamber of Commerce National Convention<br>Riverside Hilton Hotel<br>New Orleans          | Yvonne DeBow<br>(202) 466-6888  |

Are You  OK?

**<http://osdbuweb.dot.gov>**

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